

**COURT CONSPIRACY IN CAPITALISTIC SOCIETY IN
JOHN GIRSHAM'S *THE RUNAWAY JURY* (1996):
A MARXIST CRITICISM**



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ABSTRACT

This research aims at analyzing court conspiracy in capitalistic society in John Girsham's The Runaway Jury by using Marxist Criticism. The major problem in this research is how court conspiracy is reflected in John Girsham's The Runaway Jury. The research consists of two objectives: analyzing the novel based on structural elements and analyzing the novel based on Marxist Criticism. This study uses qualitative research. The object of the study is The Runaway Jury novel written by John Girsham. There are two kinds of data source: primary and secondary. The primary data source is the text of the novel John Girsham's The Runaway Jury and the secondary data sources are some books and article related to the subject. The method of collecting data in the research is library research by summarizing, paraphrasing, and documenting the data. In analyzing the data, the writer applies descriptive analysis. The results of the research are as follows. First, based on structural analysis, it is apparent that this novel conveys moral message that sometimes the trial is not always fair; the upper class can set the law because the law can be purchased. Second, based on Marxist analysis, this novel depicts the struggle against bribes and threats.

Keywords: conspiracy, threat, court, lawsuit, cigarette, jury.

A. Introduction

The Runaway Jury is American novel. The novel refers to fraud or conspiracy in a trial. *The Runaway Jury* was published in June 1996 by Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group in New York. The first edition of the novel *The Runaway Jury* is in Hardback, The novel has 401 pages and 43 chapters. *The Runaway Jury* is much more than a sober and insightful novelization of the vagaries of civil law. This novel is a thriller about two competing efforts to rig the jury's verdict. The Novel is written by John Girsham.

Researcher chooses the novel because this novel is the top ten bestsellers of the decade. According to the researcher, this novel has a point of interest in terms of structural elements, point of view, theme, plot, and moral message is very interesting.

As long as the writer knows, the writer cannot make the comparison with the other researcher. There are many students of Department of English Education who have ever studied the Marxist Critiscism as a research approach, but *The Runaway Jury* is never studied by the students of Department English Education of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

This main issue of this research is court conspiracy in capitalistic society. Conspiracy which originated from the complex would be an ideal tool for propaganda and agitation (Brockers, 2002: 76). It is analyzed by using Marxist Criticism proposed by Karl Marx. According to Selden (2005: 94), "Marxism is a social theory derived from responses to the social problems caused by capitalist ideology: imperialist war, massive impoverishment, racism, oppression, alienation, environmental destruction, and the like". Forgacs defined Marxist as "seeks to expose the dominant class" (Forgacs,1987:166). Marxism and communism are different, because Marxism is part of a system of communist ideology.

B. Research Method

In this research, the writer uses qualitative research. There are some steps to conduct the research. The first is determining the type of the study. The second step is determining the object of the study. The next is determining data and data source. The fourth step is determining technique of data collection, and the last step is determining technique of data analysis. The object of the study is court conspiracy in society reflected in John Girsham's *The Runaway Jury* (1996). It is analyzed by using a Marxist Criticism.

There are two data sources which are needed to conduct this research. They are primary data sources and secondary data sources. The source of primary data is John Girsham's *The Runaway Jury* (1996), while the sources of secondary data are taken from other sources related the study, such as: website, dictionary, and some books which support the research.

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It relates to structural elements of the novel named John Girsham's *The Runaway Jury* (1996).

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

The novel is analyzed by using a Marxist Criticism. Marxist analysis consists of five elements namely: *dialectical materialism, historical materialism, alienation, class struggle, revolution*.

The first is *dialectical materialism*, Elster stated that "dialectic as a concept that is seeing that conflict" (Elster, 2000: 47). Dialectical materialism can describe into three parts, namely: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Thesis begins when a cigarette company in living unfair agreement. Tobacco companies refuse to widow's compensation for her husband's death the plaintiff because the company has increased the levels of nicotine.

Antithesis comes when a widow lawsuit demanding the presence of a cigarette factory because of her husband's death due to the effects of smoking for 32 years and nicotine levels that are too high.

Synthesis appears when the widow has a great desire in his heart that the Tobacco companies would admit their mistake and provide redress for the death of her husband. However, the company does not approve the request so that the widow sued Tobacco companies and the case came to court.

The second is *historical materialism*. According to Slaughter (1980: 197), historical materialism only approximately cover all individual objects. This is reflected in the form of the influence of power, such as Fitch lawyers in general. But Fitch is a person who has the greatest power of other lawyers. Fitch is dominating in bribery to get the victory. Meanwhile, lawyers and judges who are not getting power would be threatened because power can buy the law.

Nicholas Easter fight Fitch against the authority although he did not receive a bribe from anyone. Nicholas has the desire of in his heart so that it runs with a fair trial. Therefore Nicholas as the jury does not defend the widow but demanded justice from the Tobacco companies. Because Nicholas had wondered why the 51-year time frame of this case was always won by Tobacco companies. In addition to his fighting for justice, Nicholas also has an ambitions. Nicholas Easter wants to make this trial be remembered by the American public. Nicholas wanted it to be known and remembered since beating cigarette company that has 55 similar cases. So, to finish this cigarette factory prosecution case will make his goal come true.

Before anyone could speak, Nicholas explained himself. "If we're serious about sending a message to the tobacco industry, then we have to shock them. Our verdict should be a landmark. It should be famous and known from this day forward as the moment the American public, acting through its jury system, finally stood up to the tobacco industry and said, 'Enough is enough' (p. 659).

The third is *alienation*. Alienation is a lower class or labor alienation within an event. Being a worker is not easy. They work hard but they do not get the product. The product are owned by someone who has the power. *The Runaway Jury* there is no such occurrence. So researchers are unable to provide a alienation in *The Runaway Jury* novels.

The fourth is *class struggle*, Carter defined Marxist social being determines consciousness as “essentially human and material of the dominant social class determines how all classes see where they are” (Carter, 2006: 55). Class struggle the novel is dominated upper class. It is proven that the upper class always presses the lower class to always be in the lower class. Upper class in *The Runaway Jury* is Tobacco companies, while the lower class is all the jury and the plaintiff in the proceedings.

Tobacco companies have a lot of money for all the things he wanted. They make the plaintiff feel scared because they are able to buy great lawyers to win their cases and also a large bribe to bribe the jurors in the trial. While the widow has only one attorney due to limited funds. The jury is bribed and judge of the Tobacco companies feels threatened if not satisfied the desires of the Tobacco companies. So that the upper class is always pressing the lower class to always be a lower class. This shows there is a difference of social class. This happens because law is often not fair. Laws can be purchased by anyone who has power. Even law may favor to someone who has a higher position or that has a high social class position.

Fitch had toyed with the idea of entering Easter’s apartment before, but now it was necessary. And it was easily. He sent Jose an operative named Doyle to the apartment building where Easter lived. Easter, of course, was at the time confined to the jury box and suffering along with Jacob Wood. He was being watched closely by two of Fitch’s men, just in case court was suddenly adjourned (p. 112).

“such as offering money to family members of jurors. Such as spending rumors in the community that the deceased, whoever he was, had four girlfriends, beat his wife, stole from his friends, went to church only for funerals, and had a homosexual son (p. 120).

The last is *revolution*. According to Marx (in Sergeant, 1981: 127), “revolution as an indication to the public that survived of crisis”. It is proven in this novel. Politics in the story of *The Runaway Jury* is a reflection of the real political situation on the world which is full of conspiracy and fraud. Previously there are many cases over 51 years ago. Many people always win the case sued the Tobacco companies. This is because the Tobacco companies have a lot of power and money to pay well-known lawyers. Tobacco companies also threat and bribe all the judges in the trial. Revolution in the breakout occurs when a jury trust of the other jury in the case of cigarette factory. Although in a state of distress, Nicholas Easter is adamant in determining the choice. He considers cigarette manufacturers guilty in this case. Cigarette factory has been harmful for health because of the addition of nicotine that smokers suffer from addiction. It leads to the death of Jacob Wood. For Nicholas’s courage, a jury are confident and 8 of the 12 jurors in favor of Nicholas. This makes the widow win the case and cigarette factories dispersed and pay a fine of 400 dollars. Since that time there has been a new history. Over 55 of cigarette factories maintaining its place eventually all disappear.

According to Fitch’s research, the Wood case against Pynex was the fifty-fifth of its kind. Thirty-six had been dismissed for a multitude of reasons. Sixteen had gone to trial and ended with verdicts in favor of the tobacco companies. Two had ended in mistrials. None had been settled. Not one penny had ever been paid to a plaintiff in a cigarette case (p. 34).

2. Discussion

After the researcher analyzed the novel *The Runaway Jury* by using Marxist theory, it is clear that this novel reflects conspiracy or fraud in the trial. In addition, Girsham want to explain a particular view of the issues Marxist, dialectical materialism, historical materialism, alienation, class struggle, and revolution. Girsham gives the story emphasis on the condition of the actual trial. The real in the trial that many conspiracies therein.

Girsham put his position in the character in the *The Runaway Jury* novel as lower class group. Usually the author wants to put his position with a happy ending. This was proved at the end of the trial between conflict of widows against Tobacco companies. Tobacco companies can be described as the group of upper class, while the widow and the jury as a lower class. Although the upper class that dominated at the beginning of the story, but in the end the case was won by the widow.

John Girsham most of the criticisms expressed about the socio-economic and political by creating a character that is central to building plots. It can be seen from the plot, the story was originally built with the introduction of each character. Once that happens lawsuit for cigarette manufacturers to seek a jury trial to decide the decision. That's when Nicholas was elected to the jury. When Nicholas became a judge, 12 jurors feel the pressure of the trial. Nicholas was not partial to either party. However, there is a desire within him to make law in the trial be fair. Nicholas knew that there is one side of the cigarette factory intimidating court nets. He controls the proceedings by way of bribes and threatening judges. Nicholas's girlfriend became part of conspiracy to sell information. Finally, Nicholas's girlfriend later dropped in favor of Fitch.

Based Girsham perspective, politics is like a game at that time. For anyone who has the power, so he was able to do anything. Economic and political aspects are a major source of conflict in society at that time. So, the conspiracy became a major issue in the story of *The Runaway Jury*. Resolution in this novel that occurs when determining the jury in the case of cigarette factory. Previously many cases over 51 years ago that many who sued the Tobacco companies. But always win by Tobacco companies. This is because the Tobacco companies have a lot of power and money that have well-known lawyers. Tobacco companies also threaten and bribe all the judges in the trial. But in the end the case was won by the plaintiff. Since that time there has been a new history. Cigarette factory for 55 similar case to maintain its place eventually defeated.

In addition became to the author, the relationship between the Girsham and the reader with regard to the position and role in society ideas about lifestyle and culture are important to society. Because the position and significant literary standing in the community, in addition to having an influence on the content of literary works, also has an influence on the acceptability of the works they produce for society.

Based on the above analysis, the conclusion of the discussion in the *The Runaway Jury* novel reflected how the tension between all the characters face in the conspiracy trial. John Girsham more using Marxist perspective to package the story in *The Runaway Jury* novel.

D. Conclusion

After analyzing *The Runaway Jury* using Marxist Criticism, the researcher comes to conclusion. First, based on structural analysis, it is apparent that in this novel moral message that sometimes the trial is not always fair, the upper class can set the law because the law can be purchased. But eventually all defeated by the truth.. John Girsham give the story to the reader by combining all elements into a single unit. He emphasized the story conflict by creating complex characters. Each character has a distinct social nature (antagonist and protagonist). In the *The Runaway Jury* novel place and time in the story does not move, but John Girsham able to pack the place and time in his net into a story. Complex relationships of the characters that closely affect the storyline nets. The author makes the story becomes interesting with colored diction. Novel of literary works of John Girsham have structural elements related to one another and build a good unity.

Second, based on Marxist analysis, this novel depicts the struggle of all kinds of bribes and threats. The struggle that does not stop after the threats were getting heavier. John Girsham shows a picture of the actual trial. Although in a trial should be a place for justice, but there are many in the conspiracy trial of many kinds. The author gives emphasis of differences social class. Upper class is more dominating in a trial. The lower class often colonize

by the higher social classes. Differences Social class make bad influent if used for negative things. Here is telling the jury that a person resign as a result of fear of threats from the Tobacco companies for Tobacco companies have social classes were higher. In this novel describes the conflict between the lawyers of the Tobacco companies to lawyers and judges in court . The existence of social class in the trial caused conflict between the Tobacco companies to fight for justice in a jury trial. Nicholas Easter struggle for justice because of fraud on the part of Tobacco companies who threaten and bribe other judges to win the case. This is motive Nicholas wants to fight for justice. *The Runaway Jury* novel is a real picture transformed into a literary work.

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